

FORsooth

Single payer health called 21st century's civil rights

by *Ike M. Thacker IV and Eustace Durrett*

Health care is the civil-rights struggle of this century, Dr. Johnathon Ross, a former president of Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP.org), said in Louisville March 10.

Ross, noting that there are now 45 million people in this country with no health insurance — up from 34 million when President and Hillary Clinton tried to get a reform plan adopted in the 1990s — said that if the standard were still (as it was then) six months without coverage instead of the current 12 months, the figure would be a downright disheartening 60 million.

Solving that problem has led Ross to give up his private practice, virtually all of his time, and a considerable portion of his money to his endeavors in favor of national health care.

Like the civil-rights struggle, too, the battle for comprehensive national health insurance has a distinguished history which Ross outlined. He traced its possible beginnings to when Theodore Roosevelt (out of office, in 1912) observed the German program. Fifteen years later, Dr. Abraham Flexner of Louisville and others began

calling, perhaps precociously, for national health insurance; the issue was explicitly put on the table with the Wagner Health Act of 1937, Ross said.

The next significant development, he added, came with the advent of World War II, as the years 1941-1945 saw wage and price controls make health insurance a workplace benefit. Four years after the end of the War, President Truman reworked the Wagner Health Act into his own national health care plan, Ross said, and in 1960 health care was one of the key issues in the debates between Nixon and Kennedy, he added.

Finally, in 1965, Ross noted, came the passage of Medicare (for seniors) and Medicaid (for the poor); the more comprehensive coverage offered by Medicaid was basically what the Wagner Act had called for 28 years earlier, he said. But of course Medicare did and does not fully cover medicines and does not pay 100 percent of the patient's bills, Ross noted. So, the groping for the right program continued, Ross said, adding that in 1974, President Nixon weighed in with his Republican plan to control health-care costs, the HMO (Health Maintenance Organization) Act.

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Social issue

—photos by Eddie Davis

President Bush heard from the people March 7 during his visit to Louisville to speak for his embattled plan to partially privatize Social Security. Speakers, including former state senator Georgia Powers (above), denounced the proposal to allow private accounts.

In Bolivia, masses take on economic greed — and win

by *Fred Hicks*

Anybody who has been able to keep up with the news from South America knows that for the last five years, Bolivia has been a pretty exciting place. In 2000, the people en masse took back the Cochabamba city water works, which the World Bank-International Monetary Fund had ordered privatized, and de-privatized it.

In 2003 the people of El Alto, the huge working-class suburb of La Paz, the capital, did the same with their water system. They have also taken action to block the sale and export of the newly-discovered natural gas deposits.

They are demanding a new hydrocarbons law so that the country's oil and gas deposits will be used in a way that benefits the people, not just the foreign energy companies. They also want a more constructive approach to the cocaine problem. To make their points, they have blocked major highways and shut down cities. And in October 2003, hundreds of thousands massed in La Paz and gave president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada 48 hours to resign, which he did. He is now in the U. S.

More than any other Latin American country, Bolivia is where neoliberalism, the kind of free-wheeling capitalist

globalization that has inspired protests all over the world, is under attack, and so far, the attackers are winning.

In late February, I joined a Global Exchange tour to Bolivia, where we met many of the people who organized and participated in these events, and learned from them something about how they did it.

In Cochabamba, we met with Oscar Olivera, one of the organizers of the Cochabamba water movement, and in El Alto, with Tomas Mamani and Felipe Lopez, president and vice-president of one of the most active neighborhood organizations of that city. In La Paz, we met with Luis Gomez, who filled us in on the history of El Alto; Alvaro Garcia, a well-known political analyst; and U.S. Ambassador David Greenlee. From all of these people and many others, we learned much more about Bolivia than can be presented here.

First, a little background. For many years, mining, mainly of tin but also of silver and zinc, was Bolivia's main source of wealth. After the Revolution of 1952, these mines were nationalized, run by the state, and the miners were organized into militant and effective unions. Then the market for tin collapsed, Bolivia got into debt, and in 1985 the mines were priva-

tized, sold at very low prices, and some 24,000 miners lost their jobs. Many moved to the major cities, including La Paz and El Alto, and some moved to the eastern lowlands which were being developed for agriculture. They did not lose their militancy, however, and ex-miners were prominent in organizing these mobilizations.

The water wars

It was the World Bank that ordered the sale of the municipal water system of Cochabamba, traditionally Bolivia's second-largest city with 800,000 people. The water was auctioned off but there was only one bidder, a consortium headed by U.S.-based Bechtel, called Aguas del Tunari. This company was given the right to install meters and charge even for the water from wells that people had dug at their own expense. Water rates soared.

The water consumers organized the

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— photos courtesy Fred Hicks

Protestors gather in Plaza San Francisco in La Paz, Bolivia, where many more came together in 2003 to demand the ouster of president Sanchez de Lazada.

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From dollars to change: investing to bring justice

by George Morrison
FORsooth editor

Like millions in his generation, Andy Loving remembers being compelled by his parents to eat his peas by being told of starving children in Africa.

"I never could figure out how I could get those peas to the kids in Africa," Loving told the Louisville FOR's Third Thursday Lunch April 21.

Loving, an advisor in socially responsible investments and a member of Jeff Street Baptist Community at Liberty, told the lunch crowd of ways to, in effect, do just that. He said the brand of finance in which he works can move resources to the poor and hungry around the world, from U.S. inner cities to the poorest Third World nations.

Loving, who has a degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said three methods exist to lift the poor into better, more self-sufficient lives. "Screened investing" he said, allows people and organizations to block any of their money from being invested in things they object to, from military contractors to alcohol and gambling.

"Shareholder activism," he added, allows holders of stock in companies to vote (in proportion to the amounts they own) in favor of inclusiveness and peace and against discrimination. Loving said the votes aren't always binding, but all can still change the course of companies, as when shareholder activism prompted Cracker Barrel Old Country Stores to end discrimination against lesbians and gays.

The third method Loving described is "Community Investing" through Community Development Financial Institutions, which make credit available to poor people often overlooked by corporate banks. The

borrowers then set up enterprises that provide jobs and put spending money into depressed areas, Loving explained.

Investors place their money into CDFIs and make a return on their investments. Stereotypes about the poor being unreliable have been shattered by CDFIs, Loving said after his talk.

He said the institutions generally have repayment rates of 93 to 95 percent, which a study showed is higher than corporate banks, Loving said.

"It's just an myth that poor people are not good credit risks," he said, adding that corporate banks generally don't lend to them because the loans are usually too small to yield an after-expense profit.

Loving, who described the three methods as a "three-legged stool," in that they are dependent on each other to stand, said socially responsive investing developed in the 1970s, growing out of concern over the Vietnam war and Apartheid, when activists sought new ways to oppose injustice.

All three methods require an adjustment of the traditional mindset that says financial returns are the only reason for investing, Loving said.

"We have all for the longest time worshipped at that altar of maximum returns," he said. "When we go in and make a deposit of money... we are taking a measure of power and saying 'Now you take this power.'

"We are not asking what is being done with that power."

However, more people are asking that question, Loving said, explaining that one out of eight investment dollars this year is expected to be made in these three socially responsive ways.

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Inn pursuit of just wages

— photo by Eddie Davis

Members of the Indiana/Kentucky Regional Council of Carpenters protest in March against the owner of the Galt House Hotel and Suites using contractors that employ non-union carpenters and pay less than area standard wages for renovation work on its twin downtown Louisville hotels. The picketers asked for a boycott of the Galt House and Galt House East on North Fourth Avenue and the Executive Inn Hotel and Executive West Hotel on Philips Lane, all owned by Al J. Schneider Co.

About Freedom and Faith

The Freedom and Faith rally in Louisville April 24 to counter the attempt by the far right to end U.S. Senate filibusters on judicial nominations fell into the gap, happening after deadline but before this issue came out. See the June FORsooth for coverage of the matter.

Federal housing cuts spur rally May 24 in Louisville

A rally May 24 in downtown Louisville will protest a four percent cut in federal Section 8 housing funding in the 2005 federal budget Congress passed last fall.

The Metropolitan Housing Coalition, the Coalition for the Homeless and many other groups are gathering 356 representative families — the number estimated to be hurt by the cut — on May 24, 5:30 p.m. in front of the Mazzoli Federal Building, 600 Martin Luther King Place. There, they will rally, then walk to the nearby Cathedral of the Assumption for an interfaith service to focus on the human face of housing needs in metro Louisville, said MHC director Jane Walsh.

She said the center on Budget Priorities estimated the four percent Section 8 cut will mean that in 2005, the Louisville Metro Housing Authority will receive \$1,942,958

less funding than it needs to support its vouchers, causing an estimated 356 low-income families to go without housing assistance. Today, over 14,000 qualified households (made up of somewhere around 34,000 people) wait for Section 8 housing vouchers because we do not have enough funding to meet our local need, Walsh said.

"We cannot afford to lose one voucher — and we can't afford to be silent," she said in a news release. "We need you to help by committing your household to represent a household who will suffer the effects of a policy that dismantles housing assistance. Please make your commitment today by completing the form available on our web site, www.metropolitanhousing.org — or by calling the Coalition for the Homeless at (502) 589-0190."

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90 Years on Peace Frontiers

Since 1915, the Fellowship of Reconciliation in the United States has led campaigns to obtain legal rights for conscientious objectors, win civil rights for all Americans, end the Vietnam War, oppose U.S. intervention in the Third World, and reverse the superpowers' arms race. An interfaith pacifist organization, the FOR has members from many religious and ethnic traditions. It is part of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, with affiliates in 40 countries.

In the development of its program FOR depends upon persons who seek to apply these principles to every area of life. If you are not already a member, we invite you to join us in this endeavor. Membership consists of signing the Statement of Purpose, indicating that you agree with FOR goals. To receive more information, please call 458-8056.

Co-chairs: Mary Horvath 479-9262
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Coming together as ONE: fighting poverty and AIDS

by Kim Smith

"One by one ... They step forward." As Brad Pitt and Cameron Diaz uttered those simple phrases on ABC and MTV in early April, a new chapter was opened in the fight against global AIDS and extreme poverty and more than 120 million Americans were introduced to ONE.

ABC and MTV aired a video featuring an all-star cast in support of ONE: The Campaign to Make Poverty History. Joining Pitt were Hollywood icons like Tom Hanks and Jamie Foxx, musicians like Bono and Justin Timberlake, and conservative public figures like Pat Robertson.

Strange bedfellows? Perhaps. But Americans responded. Since the airing of the ONE.ORG spot, over 100,000 Americans have joined with ONE.

You see, unlike most national campaigns in America of late, there are no two sides to this issue. In the same way that former presidents Clinton and Bush joined together in support of the victims of the tsunami, it should come as no surprise that progressives and Robertson could set aside their differences in the face of the global emergency that is AIDS and extreme poverty.

Every three seconds, a child dies because of treatable, preventable illness brought on by extreme poverty. Every day, 8,500 people die and another 13,500 contract the HIV virus, nearly 1,800 of whom are children. More than one billion people – including half the population of Sub-Saharan Africa – live on less than one dollar a day.

To date, over 250,000 Americans are joined with ONE, but this campaign is only just beginning. Here in Louisville, we have a special opportunity and a crucial responsibility in the fight against global AIDS and extreme poverty. It was the people of Kentucky who sent Senator Mitch McConnell back to Washington, D.C. to continue to chair the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations.

As one of America's most powerful policy makers, Senator McConnell plays a pivotal role in deciding how much money will be spent where in the world to fight corruption, disease and poverty. As Republican Whip, Senator McConnell is also responsible for rallying Republicans in support of legislation – like the Santorum-

Durbin Amendment to add \$500 million to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

As his constituents, we have a responsibility to let Senator McConnell know just how much we, as Americans, care about the emergency facing Africa and the world's poorest countries.

Over the course of 2005, Americans have an opportunity to be part of something big. We have the opportunity to help make poverty history. The first step is learning the facts. You can do that at ONE.ORG. Go there. Sign the ONE Declaration.

The next is to stay engaged. Together, we will discuss the issues facing Africa, new efforts in America and abroad to fight global AIDS and extreme poverty, and

local ONE events here in Louisville.

Finally, you can volunteer your time, your talent, and your passion to ONE. For that, you need only e-mail me at kim@data.org.

Welcome to ONE. Together, we will start to make poverty history.

Kim Smith is the Louisville field organizer for ONE, which is a coalition of 11 well-known and respected non-profit and humanitarian organizations including Bread for the World, Care, DATA, PlanUS/Childreach, International Medical Corps, International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps, Oxfam America, Save the Children, World Concern and World Vision. For more information, please visit ONE.ORG.

From dollars to change *(continued from page 2)*

"Twenty-five years ago that would have been almost no dollars invested," he told the lunch. "We've seen tremendous growth."

Loving said an outstanding example of a socially-conscious financial institution making loans available to small businesses in areas in which the corporate banks overwhelmingly reject applications is the Shore Bank, which operates in depressed areas of Chicago, Cleveland and Detroit.

"It has changed the face of the south side of Chicago, both in jobs and renovating of homes," Loving said.

He also praised the Self Help Credit Union in North Carolina for making similar

strides, but Loving lamented the fact that the Louisville area has no credit union based on the community development model. Furthermore, the Louisville Community Development Bank lacks independence, Loving maintained, because its major shareholders are the big corporate banks.

Loving said community development lending is a worldwide movement, with one key component being Oikocredit, whose web site describes it as "a worldwide cooperative society that promotes global justice by challenging people, churches and others to share their resources through socially responsible

investments and by empowering disadvantaged people with credit."

Loving said Jeff Street members have put \$125,000 into Oikocredit.

He said socially responsive investing is just one wing of the social justice movement, with an equally important one being political activism.

"It is not a replacement for the political work a lot of the people in this room are doing," Loving said. "It is a way to add on."

The Third Thursday Lunches will not be held in the summer. They will resume in September.

EarthSave Louisville's Healthy People, Healthy Planet Fun Fest

Featuring the 12th Annual Taste of Health

Hall of Fame Atrium at Slugger Field on
Sunday, May 22, 2005 from 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

The Healthy People, Healthy Planet FunFest is an exciting and interactive introduction to ways we can improve our health as well as the health of our world. Every booth has a fun activity! Sample tasty, healthy vegetarian foods from Louisville restaurants. Attend free cooking demonstrations and seminars on how our eating habits affect our world, browse in the bookstore and play some games. Our featured guests include Dr. Kerrie Saunders (Diet as Disease Prevention), Christopher D. Cook (author of Diet for a Dead Planet), Phyllis Fitzgerald (of KAIRE), Vicki Chelf (Vegetarian Times feature writer) and Ken Bergeron (world renowned chef). Admission and parking are free. For more information, call 502-569-1876 or visit www.hphfunfest.org.

DR. KERRIE SAUNDERS, "Diet as Disease Prevention". Dr. Saunders is a nationally known Presenter and Author with work featured in numerous newspapers, magazines, e-zines, and on radio. Her popular advice column, "Dear Dr. Kerrie," is featured in the widely read lifestyle magazine, VegNews. She is also the Food and Fitness Consultant for the McIntyre Health Center for Integrated Medicine, where she teaches clinic patients and professionals how to use controllable lifestyle factors to help prevent or reverse food cravings and addiction, obesity, and chronic disease processes such as arthritis, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease.

CHRISTOPHER D. COOK is an award-winning investigative journalist, and author of "Diet for a Dead Planet: How the Food Industry Is Killing Us" (New Press, November 2004). Food, our most basic necessity, has become a force behind a staggering array of social, economic, and environmental epidemics. Yet there is another way. Taking heart from the promising surge in organics, farmers' markets, and slow food, Cook argues cogently for a whole new way of looking at what we eat — one that places healthy, sustainably produced food at the top of the menu for political change. He has written for Harper's, the Christian Science Monitor, Mother Jones, The Economist and others. In 1998 he won an Aronson Award for an investigative report on welfare agencies requiring recipients to work in dangerous meatpacking plants. (From John Robbins, Founder and Board Chair Emeritus, EarthSave International: "This book is a forceful reminder that food should be — and can be — a way of life, not a way of death, for communities, our bodies, and the planet.")

PHYLLIS FITZGERALD and KAIRE, "Low-Maintenance Landscaping". Phyllis is an employee of the Air Pollution Control District and Kentuckiana Air Education (KAIRE). Learn how you can landscape your yard to avoid the use of gasoline-powered mowers, trimmers, blowers, etc. This talk stresses re-landscaping to minimize grass while planting shrubs, native plants, wildflowers, ground covers, etc. that need little maintenance, pesticides, and herbicides.

Poems by Ike M. Thacker IV

Mourning Venetian Blinds

Once
they
were
open.
Hiding
ourselves
we block
the
light.

Before You

Before you
there was life but not living.
Before you
there were gifts but not giving.
But since you came along
My heart's full of song, and
God whispers, "Look what lies
Before you."



Left implored to eagerly declare its moral dimensions

by Ike M. Thacker IV
and Eustace Durrett

Liberals and leftists should reclaim the moral high ground from the religious right and should reframe the “moral climate” by putting forth “moral language in public spaces,” noted theologian Joan Martin said in Louisville Feb. 24.

Martin, a Presbyterian teaching at an Episcopalian seminary in Cambridge, Mass., said at Louisville’s Central Presbyterian Church that those on the left are the truly moral ones and should not run from moral issues but rather eagerly grab them, for in fact they inure to their political benefit.

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., said Martin, was able to take various religious “languages” (St. Thomas Aquinas, Southern Baptist, etc.) to forge a true moral language, Martin said. But in the current climate, she added, it seems nobody is able to effectively follow his lead, or to forge a revised moral language different from

King’s. This is exactly what must be done, though, Martin said, for “moral language” deals with “who and what we admire,” thus defining us and our identity.

Moral terms like “faith” and “moral” and “justice” and “fairness”, though, take on different meanings depending on to whom one is speaking, Martin said, adding

parent,” adding that this “strict father” metes out punishment and tells us we have to beat everybody else at things — the fact of good competition is not enough. If you fail, you’re just lazy.

Obviously, Martin said, we must be very careful in applying the “strict father” model to society. Capitalism, she main-

closed off access to the halls of power for people of faith (although Ronald Reagan claimed to be Christian), Martin recalled.

In the 2004 election, similarly, family, marriage, and taxes were cast as the only moral issues; the left, she maintained, missed a big opportunity to claim the high ground back from the neoconservatives by highlighting issues like homelessness, progressive taxation, and health care, where its positions were viewed as more moral.

In summary, Martin said that it is high time for the political left in this country to take back the moral high ground from the “religious” rightists who have co-opted it, and reclaim public space in which “our” language has sway: moral language in public spaces.

Ike M. Thacker IV has taught history and computer science at the university level. Eustace Durrett is an advocate for economic equality and rail transit. Both live in Louisville.

Joan Martin said those on the left are the truly moral ones and should not run from moral issues but rather eagerly grab them...

that we admire various sorts of people, from Arnold Schwarzenegger to Desmond Tutu, Ted Kennedy, and Barbara Boxer. Thus, she said, it will not be easy to reclaim these “moral” words; but reclaim them we must. To the religious right, Martin said, morality is symbolized by the image of the “strict father” rather than the “nurturing

tained, is not the definitive political/economic system, and it contains the seeds of its own destruction.

Far from being the most moral system, it is based on the profit motive and on exploitation, she noted. The 1980 election, which marked the rise of unbridled capitalism to power in the United States, likewise

Critic of religion issues challenge we shouldn’t ignore

by Tom Louderback

Atheist Madeline Murray O’Hare liked to say repeatedly that our churches are more like country clubs than charities. Therefore, they do not deserve the tax-exempt status the government grants them, she reasoned.

Her point? Our religious institutions are involved mostly in providing services to their own members instead of giving help to people in need. She said this over and over again to lecture hall audiences and radio talk shows. Unfair as O’Hare’s charge may have been, she had obviously issued a challenge that we cannot just ignore.

The Bible stories tell us that God has acted numerous times in history to liberate the poor and oppressed. Liberation stories are spread throughout the Old Testament. The most famous of these is the story of Moses in the book of Exodus. And, there are more liberation stories in Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Amos. God not only liberates the poor but also identifies with the weak and destitute in personal and very special ways in just about every book of the New Testament.

Here are a few well-remembered scriptural passages:

“Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker.” Proverbs 14:13.

“He is kind to the poor lends to the Lord.” Proverbs 19:17.

“I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.... I was naked and you gave me clothing.... Truly, I tell you, just as you did to the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.” Matthew 25:40

“I despise your feasts and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me burnt offerings and cereal offerings, I will not accept them. But, let justice roll down like the waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream.” Amos 5:21

As it turns out, there are at least 64 Biblical passages about the liberation of the poor and oppressed and God’s love of the poor and oppressed from Exodus 3.7 to Revelation 18:1.

Theologians say that God is not actually biased toward the weak and against the strong. But, he or she is certainly not neutral in the struggle for justice. In that sense, God is always on the side of the weak and the poor. In 1979, Archbishop Oscar Romero translated the message of Matthew 25:40 into 20th century language as he comforted and inspired the poor and oppressed people of El Salvador with these words. “You are the crucified people, the presence of Christ of crucified history. They are killing you in the same way they killed Jesus. You are being killed by the sin of the world, the unjust structures, the idols of the world.”

As we know, Romero was a practitioner of Liberation Theology and before long a martyr to the cause. His theology takes us back to our roots. Put simply, it applies the teachings of The Bible to the problems caused by our economy today, particularly in Third World countries like El Salvador.

Pastors in Third World countries have been overwhelmed by the grinding poverty that is quite literally killing their parishioners. They know that they cannot care for the souls of their parishioners while ignoring the tremendous need for food, shelter, and human dignity. And, they see their churches as the only community organizations strong enough to respond to these problems in many parts of the world. As Jesus participated in the suffering of the poor, and proclaimed the good news of justice and freedom, these Third World pastors engage their

churches in the struggle for justice here and now. That commitment has brought them back to the teachings of The Bible where they find teachings which relate to the today’s economy.

The knee jerk reaction of some parishioners

in our country is to get angry when they hear the problems of hunger and poverty mentioned in their worship services too often. “We don’t need to be preached at like that,” they complain. But, isn’t this actually why we are there? Let’s try to get

closer to the roots of our religious traditions.

The writer is a member of the Louisville Friends Meeting. You can reach him at ilouderback11@hotmail.com.

The 2005 federal budget that Congress passed last fall included a 4% cut in Section 8 funding.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “In 2005, The Louisville Metro Housing Authority will receive \$1,942,958 less funding than it needs to support its vouchers, causing an estimated 356 low-income families to go without housing assistance.”

When nearly 14,800 households are already on the waiting list for Section 8 rental assistance, we cannot afford to lose one voucher.

TAKE ACTION! SPEAK OUT!

We’re gathering 356 representative families Tuesday, May 24, 5:30 p.m. *RAIN OR SHINE* Mazzoli Federal Building (600 MLK Place)

Procession to the Cathedral of the Assumption for an interfaith prayer service to follow press event.

Can we count on you to represent one family or individual who will suffer the effects of a policy that dismantles housing assistance? Please make a commitment today:

Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Organization or group: _____

Clip and send to The Coalition for the Homeless, 1115 S 4th St, 3rd Fl, Louisville Ky 40203-3103 or call Marsha Bailey at 589-0190.

Sponsoring organizations (to-date): AFSCME Council 62, Cathedral of the Assumption, Center for Accessible Living, Coalition for the Homeless, Metropolitan Housing Coalition, Presbyterian Church USA Urban Ministry, St. William Catholic Church, Women in Transition.

4 who died recalled as heroes to movement

by Gracie Lewis

In March, we said farewell to “a few good men” who have had a tremendous impact on our lives.

On Saturday, March 26 we said farewell to Metro Councilman Willie B. Bright who passed at the age of 72. Bright was the model public servant. He had an unyielding spirit of service and love for humankind. Bright had a legacy of compassion for those who were left out, the poor and senior citizens. He never forgot his roots! Just like Martin Luther King, Jr., Bright said, “If I can help somebody, my living will not be in vain.”

Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr., one of this country’s outstanding trial lawyers and a civil libertarian and philanthropist, died on March 29. Mr. Cochran started making history when he took over the case of Geronimo Pratt, a Black Panther and political prisoner who was framed for murder by the FBI. Pratt’s conviction was Cochran’s greatest loss; but that’s not how the story ended. After spending 27 years in prison, Pratt then won his case and recovered a settlement of \$4,500,000. Thanks to Johnnie Cochran! Now that he’s gone, we will surely miss him. I am so glad that I had the privilege of meeting Geronimo Pratt.

On March 26, Cornell “Kwabena” Craft “crossed the River of Night into the African Ancestral Village.” Cornell Craft, a warrior, was busy delivering our youth from the drug culture. For five years, he stood on the corner of 28th and Broadway, along with the Rev. Louis Coleman and others, saying “down with drugs, up with hope!” He helped deliver black youth from incarceration and killing. On Saturday, April 2, family and friends said farewell. Cornell left a legacy of service. The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. In Cornell’s memory, Rev. Coleman urged those present to continue the work he began.

By the time I had made it home from Cornell’s funeral, Pope John Paul II had passed at the age of 84. I recall vividly his first visit to the United States. At the time I was living in Washington, DC. Pope John Paul II spoke at St. Matthew Cathedral. He drew spectacular crowds wherever he went. Although I am not a Catholic, I attended the service and was simply amazed at his interpretation of the Gospel. Harlem had been thoroughly cleaned, perhaps for the first time. What stood out for me was his emphasis on the business of the Mission of the church — that is, saving the lost. He loved all people regardless of their faith. Pope John Paul had the uncanny spirit of being able to unite the world, no matter what was happening at the time. To God be the glory for sending us Pope John Paul II.

The writer is an activist with REACT, a group fighting toxic chemical pollution in West Louisville.



Bankruptcy latest to be tilted to wealthy

Credit card companies, for years, have injected their uncontrolled substance, usurious debt, into a struggling and vulnerable working class. Comes now our government — of, by and for the people — with a measure to severely restrict debtors victimized by these vultures from using bankruptcy as a way to restore dignity and financial solvency.

We are saddled with this while other programs, designed to help low-income earners, are under attack. Reports the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:

“The (U.S.) House (of Representatives proposed) budget could result in an estimated \$30 billion to \$35 billion in cuts over the next five years to such programs as Medicaid, food stamps, the Earned Income Tax Credit, Supplemental Security Income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and child care. These cuts are at least ten times larger than the Senate budget’s cuts to these programs, which would affect only food stamps.

“The House and Senate budgets are much closer in other areas. They both contain more than \$100 billion in tax cuts (which apparently would go mostly to high-income households), as well as more than \$200 billion in reductions in domestic non-entitlement programs and significant increases in defense spending.”

“The cuts in the House budget would come from Medicaid, food stamps, and a set of programs overseen by the Ways and Means Committee, such as the EITC and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for the elderly and disabled poor...”

How will the government function with sizeable defense increases, tax cuts for the wealthy and budget cuts for everyone else? Very well, President Bush seems to be saying.

The pestering poor are not the only pests. Reports the New York Times April 9: “Stephen L. Johnson, the acting administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, said ... that he was canceling a study of the effects of pesticides on infants and babies, a day after two Democratic

With a split in the ruling class, an organized progressive movement may have a shot at sending CAFTA to the scrap pile.

senators said they would block his confirmation if the research continued.

“Rich Hood, a spokesman for the agency, acknowledged that Mr. Johnson had canceled the test because of the objections to his confirmation. ‘They are pretty juxtaposed in time, aren’t they?’ Mr. Hood said. ‘There is clearly a connection.’

“Mr. Johnson said in a meeting this morning that, his confirmation aside, he had come to pose serious questions as to whether or not this study was the appropriate thing to do.”

“A recruiting flier for the program, called the Children’s Environmental Exposure Research Study, or Cheers, offered \$970, a free camcorder, a bib and a T-shirt to parents whose infants or babies were exposed to pesticides if the parents completed the two-year study. The requirements for participation were living in Duval County, Fla., having a baby under 3 months old or 9 to 12 months old, and spraying pesticides inside your home routinely.

“The study was being paid for in part by the American Chemistry Council, a trade group that includes pesticide makers.” Maybe I’m too cynical. A program with the acronym “Cheers” couldn’t be all bad. Shades of Joseph Mengele

Several people have written in about the victory of the Immokalee tomato pickers against Taco Bell, reported in last month’s column:

“The victory applies only for those tomatoes destined for Taco Bell, about 10-11 million pounds worth; each grower who sells to Taco Bell would get a proportional pass through penny per pound according to how much of their crop they sell to Taco Bell. I am told that in Florida McDonalds buys some 13 million pounds and Burger King 15 million, so Yum!’s share of the purchases was not that much smaller than



the others. Wal-Mart may buy a lot more.”

Another writer said: “(You did not emphasize) the role the churches played in strengthening the boycott and pushing Yum. I think having the Presbyterian Church USA right here in Louisville actively supporting CIW, and brokering some of the earlier talks as well, played a role.”

Another said: “(You) did not credit all the hard work Kentucky Jobs With Justice put into the effort.” In fairness, I sent JWJ a draft of the column, seeking input, but they were unable to respond immediately.

Finally, a writer said: “The (national) AFL CIO did endorse the CIW Taco Bell boycott, although it remains to know how many of the rank and file ceased to eat at Taco Bell stores.”

Wal-Mart is again in the news. In March Wal-Mart agreed to pay a record \$11 million for having employed hundreds of undocumented workers as janitors. In the settlement, the government allowed Wal-Mart to not admit any wrong-doing.

Speaking of sweatshops, chic retailer Eddie Bauer has contracts with the parent company of PT Victoria Indonesia. The latter company ceased production in December 2003 and its 875 now-former employees are still waiting for their back wages and their severance pay.

The Indonesian government has already ruled in favor of the workers but cannot enforce this decision because the company’s owners have fled the country.

Eddie Bauer still does business with another of the manufacturer’s subsidiaries. It has the power, and the responsibility, to help these former employees, just as Taco Bell did with Immokalee.

Let’s turn from Asia to Central America. President Bush is pushing for an early vote on CAFTA. The Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) is the biggest free trade agreement Congress has considered in over a decade.

If enacted and signed, U.S. jobs will be outsourced and off-shored, family farmers will be jeopardized and our environment will suffer.

The Bush Administration is being challenged by Republican sugar and agricultural lackeys in Congress (is there no longer honor among thieves?). They fear job layoffs resulting in their getting laid off by disgruntled voters. So, with a split in the ruling class, an organized progressive movement may have a shot at sending CAFTA to the scrap pile.

The deaths of Terri Schiavo and Pope John Paul II made the headlines. Space prevents including both, so I will write about Ms. Schiavo in next month’s column.

We turn now to the Vatican. Pope John Paul II, shepherd to the world’s 1.1 billion Catholics, is dead. Maybe it is improper, or the height of hubris, for a not-so-nice Jewish boy to write commentary on this—but I will do so anyhow, and hope my Orthodox mother doesn’t turn over in her grave.

I was living in Jerusalem, in March of 2000, when the pope came to visit. It was deeply moving to hear his (albeit general) words in support of justice for the Palestinians, contrition (if indirect) for lack of opposition of many Catholics, but only as individuals, to the Holocaust.

John Paul II’s role concerning Liberation Theology was reactionary and

disgusting, particularly in, but not limited to, Brazil and Nicaragua. He allowed right-wing UNO priests to function politically while forbidding Liberation Theology priests from doing the same.

The Catholic Church has a history of siding with the bad guys. Pope Pius XII, in the 1930’s, had blessed the Spanish butcher, Francisco Franco, and the Portuguese despot, Antonio Salazar. And before that, the Crusades and the Inquisition were certainly not ecumenical celebrations.

John Paul’s stands on personal-status doctrine were not pretty: on women as priests, on abortion, birth control, divorce.

But he also opposed unbridled capitalism, and poverty. Cuba’s Fidel Castro, while acknowledging the pope’s knee jerk anti-communism, also commented: “Now (President Bush has) gone to cry before the cadaver of John Paul II, who so opposed war, who so opposed the imperialist order, who so often condemned consumerism and this brutal war in Iraq.”

The new pope, Benedict XVI, was nailed by Reuters on April 18: “Arch-conservative German cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was elected Pope on Tuesday in a surprise choice that delighted traditionalist Roman Catholics but stunned moderates hoping for a more liberal papacy... He is expected to defend Pope John Paul’s strict orthodox legacy and reject changes in Catholic doctrine.”

I really felt for Fr. Andrew Greeley, the enlightened sociologist and author, who had said on television he opposed Cardinal Ratzinger’s elevation, but could not find the words to talk about the future. Some say the new pope is even more conservative than his predecessor.

Not so tongue-tied was Bernd Goehring, of the German ecumenical group Kirche von Unten: “We consider the election of Ratzinger is a catastrophe... We can expect no reform from him in coming years... I think even more people will turn their back on the Church.”

Pope John XXIII’s convening of Vatican II in the 1960’s held out hope for ecumenical dialog. Where the new pope winds up on the scale of enlightenment—I guess I’ll have to agree with Fr. Greeley that we’ll have to wait and see.

Your scribe must confess to a primary concern about the new pope only insofar as he relates to oppression, exploitation and injustice. It will be interesting to see how U.S. Catholics, mostly swing voters who use measures of contraception, for example, take to Pope Benedict.

There are large populations of Catholics in Africa and Latin America, with nary a pope to show for it. I have seen impoverished Mexico while not a few of its churches reek of gold.

With so many Mexican Catholics, for example, leaving the Church for evangelical denominations, putting another white boy up there may not have been the best move.

This past April 23 the Jewish people celebrated Passover, The Festival of Freedom. Jewish tradition teaches that Moses asked Pharaoh to release the Jewish people from slavery. Pharaoh refused. So, God sent ten plagues into Egypt.

As a secular Jew, but nonetheless a strongly identified Jew, I must unite with Alex Cohn and Misha Hadar, Israeli high school students publicly opposing the mistreatment of their Palestinian cousins. The plagues remain if we don’t identify with, as these Refuseniks state:

“The Palestinians who are enclosed between fences and walls,

“The hundreds of Palestinians held without trial in administrative detention,

“Tali Fahima, a peace activist held for more than six months in administrative detention in isolation,

“Work immigrants who are subjected to slavery,

“Women who have been victimized and sold into sexual slavery,

“Thousands of workers who are denied the right to fair wages and the right to strike,

“And those refuseniks who are held in military jails for refusing to take part in the (Israeli occupation of Palestinian land).”

Shalom — saalam.

Contact Ira Grupper at irag@iglou.com.

Peace campaign grows out of national FOR gathering

By Peggy Kidwell

"I WILL NOT KILL" is the new logo developed at the FOR consultation "Conscience and Courage" held in February at the FOR headquarters in Nyack, NY. This will be a media and "P.R." blitz circulated around the United States this year via billboards, souvenirs, TV, radio, etc. The theme is "Education of the Populace Around Peace — I Will Not Kill." Attached to the message will be a web site and an 800 number whereby people may become informed about nonviolence. This will be an educational campaign.

Forty to 50 participants attended, including two from the Louisville FOR chapter, myself and Dennis Bricking.

There were representatives from various FOR chapters in the United States and Canada, as well as from universities, churches, peace projects, the Black Radical Congress, educators, the Center on Conscience and War, Pax Christi, Vietnam Friendship Village, and many other organizations from eleven states, Washington, DC, and Canada.

Canada is in the process of constructing a "Peace Monument" this summer to honor those young American men who refused to join in the attack on Vietnam where 2-3 million human beings were murdered. Canada sees those young men as courageous heroes.

The United States government will try to stop the construction of this monu-

ment saying the men committed treason and belong in prison. Jeff Schutt of the War Resisters League reported on this. He lives in Canada and his videos were shown at the consultation.

A major part of the discussion centered around whether a draft is coming and how soon. Two questions talked about were: are we ready to train young people to be conscientious objectors and what should we do right now?

Los Angeles educator Arlene Inouye reported on how the board of education in L.A. was handling the army recruiters who appear on high school campuses. She said that recruiters are permitted to come only once every three months and they must come to the cafeteria to speak with students around the tables. The "peace" counter-recruiters are there also, eating and speaking with students.

Army recruiters may not just show up at any other time to talk to students; they cannot put a student in their car on school grounds to talk to them (indoctrinate them). Signage in or around the school is at least equal between army recruiters and peace recruiters. (In Kentucky we must take note of California's methods for controlling army recruiters in order to protect our children.)

Discussion centered around the possibility of becoming a conscientious objector if one does not oppose "all wars" but

only "certain wars." There was some disagreement. However, U.S. law states that, in order to receive the status of conscientious objector, one must oppose "all wars."

A video was shown titled "The Good War and Those Who Refused to Fight It"

making note of the fact that, although millions of American soldiers fought in the Second World War, there were 40,000 Americans who refused to shoulder weapons because their consciences would not allow them to kill another human being.

These men participated in social movements that transformed America. In the first Iraq invasion, almost 3,000 young men sought conscientious objection status.

Young people under age 25 were well represented at this gathering. There were heated discussions between the young and the "older" participants, centering around language, demeanor, respect (on both sides), but not around basic values and the dignity of all human beings.

This was held in common.

The writer is a member of the Louisville FOR steering committee. The video "The Good War and Those Who Refused to Fight It" is available at the FOR office in Louisville. Call (502) 458-8056 if you would like to borrow it.

FINANCIAL REPORT March 2005

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$9,204.92
Contributions	215.00
TOTAL	\$9,419.92

EXPENDITURES:

FORsooth Editing	\$150.00
FORsooth Layout	100.00
FORsooth Printing	280.20
FORsooth Mailing	212.00
Jobs With Justice	50.00
FOR National Dues	75.00
Banking Fee	3.00
Nyack CO trip expenses	513.30
Office Expenses	120.34
	<u>\$1,503.84</u>
	<u>1,503.84</u>

ENDING BALANCE	\$7,916.08
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Single payer health called civil rights

(continued from page 1)

Some twenty years later came the Clinton fiasco, and then in 1996 health care was a significant issue in the election, with the key problem with HMO coverage having become evident, Ross said. HMO coverage, he said, actually increases costs by 10 percent. Finally, Democratic candidates Bradley and Gore debated health care in the 2000 primaries, and we have been muddling through ever since, with the absolutely unacceptable result that 45 million (or, really, 60 million) are totally without health insurance, Ross said.

By contrast, said Ross, Canada — despite news coverage about long waits for treatment in that nation — loves its comprehensive single-payer program: the man who came up with it is their most respected leader, he said. Ross added that the U.S. plan can be even better because we already have a trust fund to use for financing.

The situation literally cries out for a solution, Ross said, adding that there are at least 18,314 deaths a year are due solely to the lack of insurance, and the lack of insurance also leads Americans to forego the all-important issue of preventive care.

He said a solution may before long become reality, because the problem is starting to hit the middle class (most of the uninsured are employed and only 5 percent of them have been unemployed for more than a year), which often leads to things getting done even when the plight of the poor does not.

All of this is occurring in a milieu where the gap between rich and poor in the U.S. is rapidly widening, Ross said. This leads, he said, to millions of seniors not taking heart medicine like statins and beta blockers as needed, and to a situation where the poor — even the working poor — simply cannot afford health insurance, rendering the conservatives' pet solution downright silly.

So, the need for a solution of some kind,

according to Dr. Ross, is evident; fortunately, he said, we already have a model to follow: the Medicare program. Medicare, Ross said, works very well, and administrative costs are only 3.1 percent of the total budget. By contrast, he added, even nonprofit Blue Cross administration costs are 16.3 percent of the total, and commercial 19.0 percent; in investor-owned health insurance companies the comparable figure is more than 26 percent. The upshot of all this, Ross said, is that you can get full coverage for everybody just from the saved administrative costs. We can, said Ross, have better "jobs programs" than paying people to process medical claims.

With such a dire problem and such an obvious solution, it was, Dr. Ross said, a real disappointment in the 2004 election

that President Bush proposed very little in the way of health-care reform and even John Kerry's proposal would have left 18 million people uninsured. Perhaps what neither Kerry nor Bush understood, Ross maintained, was that there will never be an efficient, competitive "market" for health-care services — medical practice is more social good than market commodity. The problem, he added, is that there is a very rich and powerful "Wizard of Oz" telling us to ignore the little man behind the curtain!

Despite the Wizard, though, there is much support for national health care — 77 percent of the public, 53 percent of employers, but alas only 47 percent of Congress support it, Ross said.

What that Congress needs to do, Ross

said, is to stand up and boldly propose a national single-payer health-care program that is universal; comprehensive; employs simplified reimbursement; allows for absolutely no investor-owned HMOs or hospitals; and, not least, provides for complete freedom of choice by the patient of his or her doctor(s) and hospital(s).

By taking the steps just outlined, he said, the United States can finally join the rest of the industrialized world in making what should be a right into a right.

Ike M. Thacker IV has taught history and computer science at the university level. Eustace Durrett is an advocate for economic equality and rail transit. Both live in Louisville.

Ending the Israeli Occupation of Palestine IS an American Issue

Call upon the U.S. to be a friend to both Israelis and Palestinians

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www.louisville-for.org

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)/Kentucky Chapter (502.893.9828)
www.adckentucky.com

One For All Store

Shop at One For All Store at 1975 Douglass Blvd in the Douglass Loop and the proceeds benefit Glade House. You can also donate usable furniture, household goods, jewelry and other items by calling 451-1963.



CELEBRATE WITH JIM FLYNN

The gathering on May 22 will likely turn into a “happening” when the entire peace and justice community comes together to participate in the commemoration of the Rev. Jim Flynn’s 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Since most of us have not seen him since his “going away” party at Masterson’s Restaurant in 1999, the thought of his return causes our minds to be flooded with memories of experiences we shared when under his leadership our world was expanded. Rather than a textbook education, he provided us with opportunities to visit Central America so that we could see and learn for ourselves. He himself served several times as a long term volunteer with Witness for Peace. Later he joined the national board of Witness for Peace in Washington, DC.

Jim really woke people up when he provided sanctuary for refugees from El Salvador. As pastor of St. William Catholic Church, he influenced the parish to become a “sanctuary church” providing for refugees who had escaped the grave injustices and violence in El Salvador. And who can forget the long “Via Crucis,” walking for several days from the Tennessee border up to Louisville, stopping at churches along the way to speak about the US oppression in Central America?

Therefore we can easily understand why Jim has requested that expressions of support at the commemoration event be made in the form of contributions to Witness for Peace. The grand occasion will take place at Masterson’s Restaurant, 1830 S. 3rd Street, 3:00-6:00 pm on May 22nd. Call David Horvath, 479-9262.



GARDENING DAY CAMP BEGINS FOURTH YEAR

What a great way for our children to learn to love and care for the earth! Especially when the coordinator is the charismatic Stephen Bartlett who has founded “Sustainable Agriculture of Louisville” (SAL). Scheduled for the weeks of June 6 through July 2, the duration of the camp will be doubled this year, which means twice as many children will benefit.

During the week, kids of diverse economic and racial backgrounds have a chance to connect with the earth, with mentors and with each other. In the mornings they prepare new garden beds, wheelbarrow mulch to walkways, mix compost with soil, transplant seedlings into new beds, sow new seed, water, weed and harvest: strawberries, blueberries and raspberries as well as onions, carrots, radishes, lettuce and greens. For some of the children, this was the first time they ever ate a raw carrot.

The kids then help prepare the salads and set the table for the noontime meal, partaken around one big table.

Some study of agriculture and rudimentary economics and food culture discussions add another dimension to this experience. Then to escape the afternoon heat, everyone walks (yes, walks) over to the public swimming pool for a relaxing and cooling swim. One remarkably courageous girl taught herself to swim!

Stephen is asking for our help in subsidizing the approximate 40% of the kids who cannot pay the \$75 per week fee. They come from low-income families and provide needed social/racial diversity to the camp. Please make tax deductible checks out to KITLAC (financial sponsor for SAL), marked “Gardening Camp.”

In addition, Stephen needs to raise an additional \$300 each week to cover staffing needs; but whether or not you can provide money, you are also needed as a volunteer. Do

what you can to “create this loving and rooted community beating with the rhythms of the good earth! Help future gardeners and farmers to germinate this summer!”

Mail checks to Stephen Bartlett, SAL Coordinator, 104 Forest Court, Louisville, KY 40206. Call 502/894-9308 or 502/896-9171. sbartlett@ag-missions.org

MORDECHAI VANUNU INDICTED

Amnesty International reports that on April 12, 2005, Vanunu was put on trial in Israel for violating the restrictions imposed on him following his release from prison exactly a year ago after serving 18 years for exposing Israel’s nuclear capabilities. He has been indicted on 21 counts of violating these restrictions by speaking to foreign journalists and attempting to leave Jerusalem to attend Christmas mass in Bethlehem. If convicted, Vanunu could face up to three years in prison. The next hearing is scheduled for May 19.

Meanwhile Vanunu continues to live at St. George’s Anglican Cathedral in East Jerusalem where he was offered sanctuary by Bishop Riah Abu El-Assal. There he rings the church bells at noon daily, and attends religious services. He fills his time with swimming in the pool at a nearby hotel, meeting visitors and tourists, giving interviews and sitting with a laptop computer at internet cafes, responding to email from international supporters. On October 13, Mordechai celebrated his 50th birthday at a party with friends at St. George’s, his first birthday in 18 years outside of Ashkelon Prison.

Due to the work of the faithful organizers in Britain and in the U.S., a large international delegation was able to travel to Israel to be present with Mordechai before and during the trial. There have been peaceful demonstrations at Israeli embassies, consulates and other locations in cities around the world.

Because of extra financial responsibilities connected with these new developments, the U.S. Campaign coordinator, Felice Cohen-Joppa, is now appealing for contributions. You may learn more by contacting the U.S. Campaign: 1/520/323-8697. freevanunu@mindspring.com Tax deductible checks of \$50 or more can be made payable to the Progressive Foundation. Mail your check to the U.S. Campaign to free Mordechai Vanunu, PO Box 43384, Tucson, AZ 85733

LOCAL PRIEST SPEAKS OUT FOR MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

In a recent letter to the Louisville Courier-Journal (4/4/05), the Rev. John Burke praised the agreement reached between Yum and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (representing Florida’s tomato pickers). However, he deplored the failure of the U.S. Senate to pass either of two bills that would have raised the minimum wage “which has been stuck at \$5.15 an hour for the past nine years despite the rising cost of living — including skyrocketing gasoline prices. (This is the same Senate that has voted seven times in the past eight years to raise its own pay.)”

He continued, “I pray that, unlike the tomato pickers, other working people will not have to wait 25 years for a wage increase. As Senator Kennedy said so clearly, ‘I believe that anyone who works 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, should not live in poverty in the richest country in the world.’”

The Senate’s refusal to approve a long overdue minimum wage increase practically ensures that the 34 million Americans who live at or below the poverty level will continue to do so. It appears that we are becoming a nation where truly ‘the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.’ How sad!”

Just three days after reading John Burke’s powerful plea, I saw Marian Wright Edelman’s long editorial in the Louisville Defender (4/7/05) declaring that millions of children would benefit from an increased minimum wage.

“The federal minimum wage is about fairness, the value of work, and the opportunities work provides. We must question why an increase has not occurred since 1997 and why friends of big business fought a proposal last month by Sen. Kennedy to give minimum wage workers a raise to \$7.25 an hour.”

In Bolivia, masses take on economic greed *(continued from page 1)*

Coordinadora de Defensa del Agua y de la Vida (Coalition in defense of water and life), called for a demonstration, and ten thousand people showed up. The government was initially unresponsive, so a mass meeting was called, and 70,000 responded. There were police assaults and tear gas, and one person was killed by an army sharpshooter, which further infuriated the people. They took over the Aguas del Tunari building and

ran Bechtel out of town. A new entity was formed to administer the water, and its board includes Coordinadora members.

A few years later, the same thing happened in El Alto. In 1997 the World Bank ordered the privatization of the water, and it was sold to a conglomerate called Aguas del Illimani, dominated by the French water giant Suez Lyonnaise.

El Alto is a huge and growing working-

class suburb on the high plateau overlooking La Paz. In the last 50 years it has grown from nothing to a city of nearly 800,000 people. The vast majority are indigenous Aymara, and many are ex-miners. El Alto is also where the La Paz airport is, and a number of main highways pass through it.

When by 2003 it had become clear that Aguas del Illimani was going to raise water rates beyond the capacity of the people to pay, and that 200,000 of them would be left with no access to water at all, they got mad. They blocked the roads from La Paz, carried out marches and work stoppages, and the government was forced to cancel the contract with Suez.

The gas wars

Water is not the only issue in El Alto. Huge deposits of natural gas were discovered in southern Bolivia in the 1990s. Quickly a transnational consortium was formed, dominated by major British and Spanish companies, and it came up with a plan to export the gas, piping it across the Andes to the Pacific, where it would be liquified and shipped to the United States and Mexico.

The people, already stirred up by the water situation, foresaw a repetition of the same pattern that had kept Bolivians in poverty for centuries despite sitting on vast mineral wealth.

There were calls for a new hydrocarbons law, in which these resources would be industrialized in Bolivia, with Bolivian labor, and used for the development of Bolivia. In September, there was a huge

demonstration in La Paz, involving thousands of people, protesting the plans to export the gas, and many demanded the gas be nationalized.

The government responded with force, and many were killed, which infuriated the people, who swelled the ranks of the protesters. In October 2003, protest marches in La Paz over the water and the gas coalesced. Thousands from El Alto descended on La Paz, joined the forces already there, laid siege to the government palace, and forced the president to resign.

These movements are not organized by political parties nor by labor unions. They are organized mainly by neighborhood organizations, and are not trying to unseat the president. They simply tell him, forcefully, what they want.

The current president, Carlos Mesa, was the ousted president’s vice-president, and took office as the constitution provides. He is a good free-market neoliberal, and thinks the most important thing is to keep Bolivia attractive for international investment. The water takeovers and the potential restrictions on gas exports frighten him. He submitted his resignation, but it was not accepted.

He remains surprisingly popular, possibly because he refuses to call for the use of force against the demonstrators. The previous president did so, and was forced out of office.

Next month: The coca wars.

The writer is a retired professor of anthropology and activist against global neoliberal economics.



— photos courtesy Fred Hicks

The Bolivian capital La Paz, as seen from the suburb of El Alto.

Calendar for peacemakers

May 1 (Sun) **VIGIL FOR PEACE** every first Sunday evening remembering all those suffering from conflicts in the Middle East. Bring a sign. Bardstown Road at Douglass Blvd. 7:00-8:00 pm. Sponsored by **LPAC** (Louisville Peace Action Community). Call Ken Nevitt, 558-9124. E-mail: pcunity@yahoo.com www.louisvillepeace.org

May 4 (Wed) **AMY GOODMAN**, host and executive producer of Democracy Now: **“The News That’s Not Making the News, and Why.”** Democracy Now is a national, daily, independent, award-winning news program that could be aired daily in Louisville. Clifton Center, 2117 Payne Street, free. Call Carmichael’s Book Store, 456-6950. www.louisvillepeace.org

May 6 (Fri) **NOON VIGIL FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST**, including a news update. **EVERY FRIDAY AT SIXTH AND BROADWAY**, in front of the Federal Court House (where Senator McConnell’s office is located). We vigil in solidarity with the **“Women in Black”** who vigil every Friday at noon in Israel. Sponsored by the Louisville Committee for Israeli/Palestinian States, the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, and the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Call Beverley Marmion, 451-5658.

May 11 (Wed) **KITLAC (Ky Interfaith Taskforce on Latin America and the Caribbean)**. Presbyterian Seminary. 7:30 pm. Call David Horvath, 479-9262, or Pat Geier, 456-6586.

May 11 (Wed) **IPP BOOK DISCUSSION featuring Professor Eugene March**, theologian, author and ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Dr. March will discuss his new book, *The Wide, Wide Circle of Divine Love: A Biblical Case for Religious Diversity*. Carmichael’s Book Store, 2720 Frankfort Ave, 7:00 pm. Call Interfaith Paths to Peace, 214-7322. www.interfaithpathstopeace.org

May 12 (Thu) **CAPA** (Citizens Against Police Abuse) - Every second and fourth Thursday. 325 W. Oak Street.

May 13 (Fri) **PIZZA AND A MOVIE, “The Day the Earth Stood Still.”** Enjoy pizza and soda while watching the film, with discussion following of the spiritual dimensions of the film led by Linda Peeno and Terry Taylor. James Lees Presbyterian Church, 1741 Frankfort Ave, 7:00 pm. Sponsored by Interfaith Paths to Peace, 214-7322.

May 14 (Sat) **JOBS with JUSTICE Annual Coalition Membership Meeting and Solidarity Celebration**. Americana Community Center. Call Attica Scott, 625-3724.

May 15 (Sun) **COMMITTEE FOR ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN STATES**. (Every Third Sunday) First Unitarian Church, 4th & York. 3:00 pm. Special screening of the Frontline documentary, **“Israel’s Next War?”** Call Beverley Marmion, 451-5658.

May 15 (Sun) **“AIM HIGHER”** focusing on military counter recruitment. Every 2nd Sunday at 6:00 pm at 2263 Frankfort Ave. Note: regular meeting date changed for this month only. Call Mike Slaton, 636-5848, cheslaton@hotmail.com

May 16 (Mon) **NAACP GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**. New office location at 1245 Catalpa Court, 7:00 pm. For more information, call Raoul Cunningham, 776-7608. The NAACP Youth Council meets every 3rd Saturday at noon.

May 16 (Mon) **KENTUCKY ALLIANCE AGAINST RACIST & POLITICAL REPRESSION**. Braden Center, 3208 West Broadway. Call 778-8130.

May 17 (Tue) **METROPOLITAN HOUSING COALITION ANNUAL MEETING and DINNER** at the newly built Downtown Marriott. Keynote speaker **JAMES CARR, Senior Vice President of Research at the Fannie Mae Foundation**, a private, nonprofit organization, the largest foundation in the country devoted to affordable housing and community revitalization. Mr. Carr, visiting professor at Columbia University, has lectured extensively on housing and urban policy as well as housing financial services. **Leonard Watkins** will be honored for his commitment to Louisville, particularly to inner city neighborhoods. Tickets are \$35. Table of eight \$300. Arrive at 5:00 pm for the networking bonanza. To learn more, call Jane Walsh, 584-6858. Visit the newly designed website: www.metropolitanhousing.org

May 19 (Thu) **LPAC** (Louisville Peace Action Community) (every Third Thursday evening). Douglass Blvd Christian Church, 7:00 pm. Call Judy Munro-Leighton, 456-6914; Ellen Schagene, 451-6392; or Ken Nevitt, 558-9124.

May 22 (Sun) **EarthSave Louisville’s HEALTHY PEOPLE, HEALTHY PLANET FUN FEST**, featuring the 12th Annual Taste of Health introducing ways we can improve our health as well as the health of our world. Sample healthy vegetarian foods from Louisville restaurants. A fun activity at every booth. Free cooking demonstrations. Free admission and parking. Hall of Fame Atrium at Slugger Field. 11:00 - 5:00. Call Jennifer Rubenstein, 569-1876. louisville@earthsave.org Visit www.louisville.earthsave.org

May 22 (Sun). **FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION WITH REV. JIM FLYNN**. Commemoration of the event will be at Masterson’s Restaurant, 1830 S. Third St, 3:00 - 6:00 pm. See Jean’s Journal in this issue for more details. Call David Horvath, 479-9262.

May 23 (Mon) **DEADLINE FOR JUNE ISSUE OF FORsooth**. Contact George Morrison, editor, 944-6460. E-mail: klm86@netzero.com For calendar listings, contact Jean Edwards, 458-8056. E-mail: edwardsfor@bellsouth.net

May 23 (Mon) **F.O.R. STEERING COMMITTEE** (every 4th Monday). Presbyterian Seminary, 1044 Alta Vista Road, Nelson Hall, #10, 7:30 pm. Visitors are encouraged. Call cochairs, Pat Geier, 456-6586, or Mary Horvath, 479-9262.

May 24 (Tue) **FAMILIES TO PROTEST LOSS OF HOUSING ASSISTANCE**. 356 representative families are needed to gather at 5:30 pm at the Mazzoli Federal Building (6th & Chestnut, MLK Place) and process to the Cathedral of the Assumption for a press event and interfaith prayer service. This year an estimated 356 low-income families have lost housing assistance because of a 4% cut in Section 8 funding. You are needed to represent one family or individual at the rally. Call Marsha Bailey, 589-0190. Sponsored by Coalition for the Homeless, Metropolitan Housing Coalition, Presbyterian (USA) Urban Ministry, and Cathedral of the Assumption.

May 30 (Mon) **INTERFAITH MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE**, a solemn remembrance of past conflicts and present fields of violence including chant poetry, music and words of peace presented by Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Muslims, Baha’is, Quakers, members of Unity and other religions, with audience participation and a beautiful candle-lighting ceremony. Sponsored by Interfaith Paths to Peace. Call Terry Taylor, 299-7591. director@interfaithpathstopeace.org

June 2 (Thu) **FORsooth LABELING at Beverley Marmion’s, 6:30 pm**. Many thanks to the dedicated peacemakers who render this vital service every month. Call 451-5658.

June 4 (Sat) **“HOT FUN IN THE SUMMER TIME”** presented by **Rainbow Spiritual Center Madcap Cabaret**. Lip/sync show benefiting the Connection Theater, 130 S. Floyd Street at Market. Doors open 6:30 pm. Show 7:00 - 9:30 prompt. Sliding scale. Contact 386-9680.

June 14-16 (TWT) **WORKSHOP: EMPOWERING the ANGRY CHILD for POSITIVE LEADERSHIP**, 3-day training for adults who work with angry disruptive youth. Participants receive training binder, practice leading hands-on activities. \$350 includes continental breakfast and lunch. Limited to 40. Sponsored by the Peace Education Program. Call 589-6583. peaceeducation@iglou.com

July 4-9 (MTWTF) **CHILDREN’S THEATER TOUR from the ALROWWAD CENTER in the AIDA REFUGEE CAMP, BETHLEHEM** presented by **Abed Abu Srour**, accompanied by their teachers/directors. Watch for details. Call Carla Wallace, 244-7855, or Pat Geier, 456-6586. An historic event for Louisville, bringing Palestinian children and local youth together, sharing their art and culture while contributing to our understanding of the realities of their daily lives.

July 12 (Tue) **FRIENDSHIPMENT CARAVAN TO CUBA, calling for a people to people foreign policy**, sponsored by Pastors for Peace. You can travel with the Caravan. Call 212/926-5757. Help break the blockade. Challenge the immoral US foreign policies against Cuba. Stand in solidarity with the people of Cuba. Learn about Cuba and what the US government doesn’t want you to see in Cuba! Deliver tons of humanitarian aid to Cuba where trade is restricted by the US. cucaravan@igc Join in a potluck supper to welcome the caravan to Louisville. Call Mary Ann Lambert, 425-3844.

July 12-14- (TWT) **TRAINING OF EDUCATORS: Conflict resolution & peer mediation for school-based personnel**. Sponsored by the Peace Education Program. \$350 (\$650 for team of two). Call 589-6583. peaceeducation@iglou.com

OUT OF TOWN EVENTS

June 29-July 2 (WTFS) **TWELFTH ANNUAL FAST & VIGIL TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY, at the Supreme Court.**

Visit www.ABOLITION.org or call 800/973-6548 for details. For a complete list of national and local upcoming death penalty related events, please visit www.CUADP.org and click on “Event Calendar.”

July 15-19 (FSSMT) **INTER-CULTURAL TEEN DELEGATION TO NICARAGUA**, sponsored by Witness for Peace Southeast. Contact Gail Phares, 1/919-856-9468. wfpse@witnessforpeace.org

Regular Meeting Times for Area Organizations

AD HOC COALITION FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION – (778-8130)

ADDICTION RECOVERY ADVOCATES OF KENTUCKIANA – 2nd Thursday (585-3375)

AMERICA 2000 DEMOCRATIC CLUB – 4th Tuesday (459-0616)

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL – 1st Saturday (637-8951)

BIONEERS / SUSTAINABLE LOUISVILLE – Tuesdays (336-9440)

BREAD FOR THE WORLD – 2nd Tuesday (239-4317)

CAPA (Citizens Against Police Abuse) – 2nd Thursday (778-8130)

C.E.A.S.E. [Citizens for Equitable Assignment to School Environments] – (778-9427)

CLARK & FLOYD COUNTIES AIDS COALITION – 3rd Thursday (288-2706)

CLOUT [Citizens of Louisville Organized and Working Together] – (583-1267)

COMMITTEE FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST – 2nd Monday (456-6586)

COMMON CAUSE – 1st Tuesday, every other month (228-1534)

COMMUNIST PARTY USA – Sunday evenings (473-2659)

CONVERSATION CAFE – Wednesday evenings (454-4820)

CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD – Books by Neale Donald Walsch. 1st Monday (468-2305)

COUNTER RECRUITMENT, “Aim Higher” – Second Sunday (636-5848)

EARTH SAVE LOUISVILLE – 2nd Sunday (569-1876)

FAIRNESS CAMPAIGN – Quarterly community dialogues and volunteer opportunities (893-0788)

FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION – 4th Monday (456-6586 or 479-9262)

GREATER LOUISVILLE SIERRA CLUB – 3rd Tuesday (897-3335)

GREEN PARTY – 1st Tuesday (456-9540)

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY – Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays (583-6599)

HATE FREE SCHOOLS COALITION – 3rd Thursday (454-3300)

INTERFAITH PATHS TO PEACE – 1st Tuesday (214-7322)

JEFFERSON COUNTY WELFARE REFORM COALITION – 2nd Friday (585-3556)

JOBS WITH JUSTICE KENTUCKY (625-3724)

JUSTICE RESOURCE CENTER – 3rd Saturday (774-1116)

KENTUCKIANA FOR KUCINICH IN 2008 – 1st Thursday (473-2659 or 459-6361)

KFTC [KENTUCKIANS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH] – 2nd Monday, jointly with POWER (589-3188)

KY AIDS LIFE ALLIANCE (KALA) – Every Thursday (479-7884)

KY ALLIANCE AGAINST RACIST & POLITICAL REPRESSION – 3rd Monday (778-8130)

KY COALITION TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY – Last Tuesday (721-8885)

KITLAC (KY INTERFAITH TASKFORCE ON LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN) – 2nd Wednesday (479-9262)

KY RAINBOW/PUSH COALITION – (774-4000)

LESBIAN SUPPORT GROUP – 2nd and 4th Thursdays (587-6225)

LOUISVILLE COMMITTEE FOR ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN STATES – 3rd Sunday (451-5658)

LPAC (LOUISVILLE PEACE ACTION COMMUNITY) – 3rd Thursday (558-9124)

LOUISVILLE WOMEN CHURCH – Meditation 1st & 3rd Sundays (473-8435)

LOUISVILLE YOUTH GROUP – Friday nights (454-3300), www.louisvilleyouthgroup.org

LOUISVILLIANS IN FAVOR OF EQUALITY (L.I.F.E.) – Sunday evenings (473-2659)

METRO SWEEP FOR ACCESS – 3rd Tuesday (895-0866 or 899-9261)

METROPOLITAN HOUSING COALITION – 4th Wednesday (584-6858)

NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) – 3rd Monday (634-1804)

NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) – 2nd Monday (245-5287)

PARENTS, FAMILIES & FRIENDS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS (P-FLAG) – 3rd Sunday (329-0229)

PAX CHRISTI – Last Wednesday (456-9342)

PEACE & COMPASSION BUDDHA CIRCLE/CML – (451-2193, brozier@bellsouth.net)

PEOPLE’S AGENDA – 2nd Tuesday (778-8130)

POWER [PEOPLE ORGANIZED AND WORKING FOR ENERGY REFORM] – 2nd Monday, jointly with KFTC (778-2687)

RCRC [Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice] – (585-3050)

RESULTS (a hunger lobby) – 2nd Saturday (451-4907)

SHADHULIYYAH SUFI SPIRITUALITY GROUP – Thursday nights (893-6122)

Note: If your group would like to be added to this list or if information needs to be updated, please let us know by calling 458-8056.